

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 002852

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2030

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [EG](#) [I2](#) [OVIP](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ POLICY COORDINATOR JONES'S MEETINGS WITH
EGYPTIAN INTELLIGENCE CHIEF AND FOREIGN MINISTER

Classified by Charge Gordon Gray for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

1. (S) During an April 11 visit to Egypt, Iraq Policy Coordinator and Senior Advisor (S/I) Richard Jones met separately with Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Soliman and Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit. They expressed interest in hosting a preparatory meeting of senior officials ahead of an international conference on Iraq, but sought additional details. Aboul Gheit proposed that the international conference in Europe be held June 1, immediately following a ministerial meeting in Barcelona. Soliman pressed on the need to strengthen Iraq's security and intelligence services, while Aboul Gheit repeated Egypt's open invitation to train Iraqis in any field. Aboul Gheit said that the GOE could offer training to Iraqi judges. Both Soliman and Aboul Gheit expressed general concerns over Iran's influence in Iraq. To a request that Egypt forgive the relatively small amount of Iraqi debt on its books, Aboul Gheit showed interest in the details of Iraq's debt but did not offer a definitive reply. End summary.

2. (U) S/I Jones was accompanied by Colonel Phil Smith of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Larry McDonald of the Treasury Department, and Staff Assistant Matthew Fuller. The Charge and poloff (notetaker) also joined the meetings.

Meeting with Egyptian Intelligence Chief Soliman

3. (S/NF) Soliman told Jones that Egypt considered the strengthening of Iraq's security and intelligence capabilities as the crucial element in ensuring stability there. A clear, obvious plan should be put in place promptly, he suggested, to recruit, train, and arm Iraq's security services over the next two or three years. It was also important, he added, that the focus of such training be on units rather than individuals and that these units be well equipped to carry out their responsibilities. The Iraqi intelligence forces, he continued, require training and independence from the Coalition as well as clearly-defined missions. Only with a strengthened intelligence capability would the Iraqis be able to stop infiltrations from across the borders of weapons and insurgents and control the domestic security situation. Such moves would permit a decrease in the number of U.S. troops in Iraq. Soliman also counseled that new faces be brought into the political leadership in order to convince Iraqis that a new political era is truly at hand and the insurgency is "a cancer in the society."

4. (C) Jones described for Soliman USG policy priorities in Iraq, including a detailed description of Coalition training efforts for Iraqi security personnel and a readout on the political timetable for the new government in Baghdad. Stressing the USG goal of handing off security responsibility to the Iraqi government, Jones gave a progress report on training efforts for Iraqi forces and on the political process. Describing Iraq's political timetable, Jones explained USG plans to co-host with the Europeans an international conference on Iraq to build on what had been accomplished last November in Sharm El Sheikh. The goal, he stressed, was to build further international support for Iraq in the political, security, and economic realms. Egypt, Jones added, might hold a preparatory meeting of senior officials in May to prepare for the conference, to be held in either Brussels or Luxembourg. Soliman immediately expressed interest and support, noting that he would explore the subject with President Mubarak and Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit. Jones also suggested that Egypt might consider forgiving the remaining, relatively small amount of debt owed it by Iraq as a symbolic show of political support at the conference.

5. (S/NF) Changing direction, Soliman said that his organization had been approached recently by various Iraqis who considered themselves part of the resistance. The GOE was willing to deepen such contacts should the USG concur via intelligence channels. Specifying that these Iraqis were a

mixture of Sunni tribal and former-regime elements interested in political participation, Soliman said that he would raise the topic with Director of Central Intelligence Goss during his late-April visit to Washington. Soliman, while acknowledging that the opposition figures would make demands in return for engaging with Egypt, believed that it was important to engage them to bring them into the political process and to isolate foreign terrorists.

16. (S/NF) Expressing GOE willingness to provide training to Iraqis, Soliman suggested Egypt could send moderate Islamic figures to Iraq to preach a message of non-violence. Responding to Ambassador Jones's interest in the idea, Soliman further suggested Egypt could provide cultural and entertainment programming to Iraq's television and other media outlets to push a non-violent, tolerant, and moderate interpretation of Islam. Soliman also offered that the Iraqi government should link the apportionment of its regional development and construction financing to each province's security status. In other words, he argued, should attacks and violence continue in a specific region, that region would not receive funding from the central government. Iran, Soliman added, was also a major concern and should be prevented from spreading its influence into Iraq and jeopardizing the security situation there.

Meeting with Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit

17. (C) During their 45-minute meeting April 11, Aboul Gheit peppered Jones with questions on U.S. efforts on the ground in Iraq, and pressed on the need to rebuild Iraqi security forces and promote self-sufficiency for Iraqi society. Responding to Jones's assertion that training of Iraqi forces was progressing well, Aboul Gheit queried why Egypt's offer to train Iraqi forces had not been taken up more robustly. Responding to Jones's assertion that high training costs in Egypt was a concern, Aboul Gheit proposed the issue be discussed between the respective officials involved. Similarly, the Minister offered Egypt as a venue for legal and judicial training, given that Iraq's needs are substantial and the USG considers this area a priority ("send us 2,000 judges, and we'll train them"). Egypt can do any sort of training and will do it cheaper and in line with the Iraqi mentality which "we understand very well," Aboul Gheit pressed.

18. (C) Raising the issue of an upcoming international conference on Iraq to be co-hosted in Europe by the United States and the Europeans, Jones requested that Egypt host a preparatory meeting of senior officials to prepare for that conference. Such a meeting would offer a connection to the Sharm El Sheikh ministerial hosted by the Egyptians last November, Jones said. Aboul Gheit sought additional details but offered a positive initial reaction. First clarifying that the conference was not a pledging conference, he requested that the Embassy pursue the issue further, but noted that it was crucial that there first be a government in Baghdad before scheduling the meeting. (Note: The Embassy met on April 12 with a working level official on Aboul Gheit's staff and will report separately on the results. End note) Aboul Gheit suggested that the international conference be held June 1, immediately following a previously-scheduled Euro-Mediterranean Partnership meeting of foreign ministers in Luxembourg which he and other regional players would attend.

19. (C) Aboul Gheit offered his personal view on societal changes in Iraq, highlighting his negative impression that Iraqi society was becoming "Islamicized," evidenced, he said, by the larger number of veiled Iraqi women. His concerns were amplified by what he perceived as a worrying trend of growing Iranian influence in Iraq. The U.S. must do more, he asserted, to prevent such influence.

110. (C) Jones and Treasury official McDonald requested that the GOE consider forgiving sovereign debt owed by Iraq as a symbolic gesture to help Iraq's financial situation. Aboul Gheit sought clarification on the amount of debt Iraq owed within the region and to Paris Club countries, and said he understood the importance of allowing Iraq to write off its debts in order to access new loans on the international financial markets.

111. (U) S/I Jones did not have the opportunity to clear this message prior to his departure.

112. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

Visit Embassy Cairo's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/cairo>

You can also access this site through the
State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

